Northstowe Joint Officer Team

In order to move the Northstowe project through the formal planning process and towards delivery as quickly as possible, a joint officer team is being established. The County Council's Cabinet has agreed the principles of a joint team between the County and South Cambridgeshire District Council to manage the planning process. We have commenced recruitment. An outline planning application for phase 1 is to be submitted by the end of February. Detail of the wider Northstowe site will also be shared at this time in the form of the Development Framework Document.

Chesterton Interchange

Additional Business Case data was submitted to the Department for Transport on 23 December 2011 and on 11 January 2012. These show an even stronger business case than previous work. Further work is needed to confirm the costs at a more detailed design stage, but at this point there is enough detail for an 'in principle' confirmation of the schemes place in the upcoming rail franchise specifications for the Thameslink and the long term Greater Anglia rail franchises to be given by the Minister of State for Transport. This will give the certainty that is required to make the commitment to develop the scheme further. Work continues to develop the scheme, and the final confirmation of the scheme in the franchises will be sough in late spring / early summer. Detailed discussions with the Department and with Network Rail are taking place to agree the detail of how the scheme repayments will work, and the scope and detail of the partnership agreements that will deliver the Interchange.

Rights of Way and Access

70 volunteers have received training on the Rights of Way legal records through funding secured from Natural England. A further two training events are planned for February and March for the Parish Path Partnership volunteers. A new web based forum has been set up through the LGA to enable better communication and information sharing between the 80 members of the Parish Path volunteer scheme. Byway closures this season have been successful with minimal vandalism and only one set of barriers being stolen. Teams are currently investigating the use of 'smart water' and alternative materials to combat metal theft.

Disability Sports

Currently, only 10% of disabled people take part regularly in sport compared to 22% of the able bodied population in Cambridgeshire. The Ability PLUS Group (County Disability Sports Forum) have written a development plan and are organising at least ten major events/activities this year to try and address some of the gaps. The Group will also be submitting an application to Sport England when they announce their next funding round where £8m will be dedicated to the promotion of sport for disabled people.

Going Local

'Going Local' has been commissioned with the aim of increasing the number of referrals made to local community and voluntary groups. The work is being led by Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service (CCVS) who are working closely with the Hunts Forum and Voluntary Action East Cambs, as well as Care Network and Age UK. The first stage of the project, which surveyed 100 groups, has produced some useful intelligence, including:

• Much of the community and voluntary sector exists on very low levels of, often insecure, funding.
• Only 9% of respondents currently receive referrals from Care Teams, but 70% of them said they would be interested in accepting more and many groups do have availability to take on more people.
• For many of the groups participating in the survey maintaining their independence is very important.
• CCVS are now designing Stage 2 of the project with the objectives of increasing care team referrals, ensuring accuracy and coherence of signposting information.

Project Trinity

This is part of the Quality for Adults Programme being implemented jointly by the County Council, Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust.
The work of the project is three-fold; firstly to implement a new Adult Integrated System which will enhance our data recording system, secondly to review and streamline our business processes and lastly to introduce more mobile working practices. The project aims to:

- Deliver an improved service user and practitioner experience
- Improve efficiency and robustness of statutory reporting
- Provide a long-term supportable technology programme
- Achieve improved value for money

A group of Practitioner Service Leads has been set up to ensure that frontline experience is used to inform the changes that the project will deliver.

Development of Mental Health Supported Housing in Cambridgeshire

There are 230 units of mental health supported accommodation in Cambridgeshire. These are designated accommodation services for people with mental illness and have support staff either based on the site of the accommodation scheme or offer visiting support to tenants living in the designated housing scheme. These designated mental health support projects are in addition to people with mental illness being supported in their own independent tenancies supported by staff of CPFT or community support schemes funded by Cambridgeshire County Council

The majority of accommodation units have been retendered this financial year. New contracts will commence on 1 December 2011 and 1 April 2012. The service specification is designed to organise accommodation services more clearly in terms of levels of staff support in order to match people with the appropriate level of support so that they can relearn skills and can be enabled to move to independent accommodation. Move-on from mental health supported accommodation projects into ordinary housing has been identified as an element in successfully enabling access to supported housing. The existing housing support team is being redesigned to focus on working with people to enable them to move from designated mental health supported accommodation to their own independent tenancies.

Funding to tackle ‘troubled families’ – but payment by results

The Government has identified around £450 million to support local authorities to turn around the most troubled families in England. Nationally government believes there are around 120,000 such families whose difficulties with crime and anti-social behaviour create a significant cost to the public sector.

This initiative and potentially the associated funding will link strongly to the significant work with partners already being led in Cambridgeshire around ‘high demand families’, exploring community budgets and the Family Intervention Project (FIP) model.

Demographic Pressure on Primary Schools in North Cambridge

There is continuing demographic pressure on primary school places in Cambridge City, arising from the increase in the birth rate. This pressure is now concentrated in the north of the City, and proposals for making the necessary additional provision are currently being developed, on an incremental basis, starting with the proposed expansion of the Grove Primary School from September 2012. The work is being undertaken in consultation with a number of stakeholders, including the relevant primary schools, local County Councillors and the City Council. currently being developed, on an incremental basis, starting with the proposed expansion of the Grove Primary School from September 2012. The work is being undertaken in consultation with a number of stakeholders, including the relevant primary schools, local County Councillors and the City Council.

Social Work - Working for Families

On Monday 23 January the Children's Social Care Service successfully launched the first of 44 Children's Social Work Units. This is a significant milestone in the Social Work – Working for Families transformation programme which started in October 2010.

Cambridgeshire's Social Work Unit Model will establish 44 Social Work Units across the 3 assessment and care management functions. The Model will enable practitioners to spend more time working directly with the families they support, reduce levels of risk, increase the consistency care of care provided and support families to achieve better outcomes.

We will gradually roll out more Units over the coming months and plan to fully implement the Social Work Unit Model by the autumn of 2012.

Community Hubs

As part of the Libraries Services review we are introducing community hubs across the county. The focus of the initial work is on libraries which were potentially at risk. We have been working with the Library Service and local Parish, District and County Councillors to establish a way forward and we anticipate that by April 2012 we will have the first community hub up and running.

SPINE Shared Services Project

The SPINE shared services project with Suffolk Libraries is moving on rapidly. An informal agreement has been signed to cement the partnership and the two authorities have now jointly procured a new Library Management System. This is in the process of being implemented in both authorities, with Cambridgeshire Libraries expected to 'go live' in the summer. The new management system will provide a shared platform for more harmonization of processes, enabling economies of scale between the two authorities, as well as benefits for customers including the potential to share stock across boundaries.

Self-Service

The roll out of self service facilities into all libraries was completed in mid-January, marking the end of an extremely successfully and fast paced project that went without a hitch. Self service facilities will enable more of our libraries to be operated by single staffing and opens up opportunities for communities to extend opening hours on a self service basis.

County Councillor John Reynolds
Feb 2012.